

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6279

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS, RO, OVIP (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
SUBJECT: BEGIN VISIT TO ROMANIA

REFS: (A) TEL AVIV 5971, (B) BUCHAREST 6152,
(C) BUCHAREST 6211, (D) BUCHAREST 6228

SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL REGARDS THE VISIT
BY PRIME MINISTER BEGIN NEXT WEEK TO ROMANIA AS AN IMPORTANT
OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT ITS VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIA-
TIONS. THE ISRAELIS BELIEVE THAT THEIR DISCUSSIONS WILL
BE MADE KNOWN TO THE ARABS, INCLUDING THE PLO, AND TO
OTHER EAST EUROPEANS. BILATERAL ISSUES WILL NOT BE A
MAJOR SUBJECT AND EMIGRATION OF ROMANIAN JEWS TO ISRAEL
WILL BE HANDLED VERY CAREFULLY. END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE BEIN VIST TO ROMANIA WITH
THE DCM OF THE ROMANIAN EMBASSY (IRONOI) AND WITH
JOSEF GOVRIN, MFA DIRECTOR FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS,
THEY HAVE INFORMED US THAT THE PRIME MINSTER'S
PARTY DURING THE VISIT TO ROMANIA WILL INCLUDE MRS. BEGIN,
MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL EVRON, THE PRIME MINISTER'S MILI-
TARY AIDE PROAN, HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY KADISHAI, PRESS
SECRETARY PATTIR AND DIRECTOR OF DIASPORA AFFAIRS AVNER.
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2. WHY ROMANIA? GOVRIN SAID THE INVITATION WAS EXTENDED
BY ROMANIA AND WAS A RENEWAL OF AN INVITATION WHICH HAD
PREVIOUSLY BEEN EXTENDED TO FORMER PRIME MINISTER RABIN.
THE VISIT WOULD CONTINUE A SERIES OF VISITS TO ROMANIA,
INCLUDING THOSE BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER MEIR IN 1972,
FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON IN 1975 AND BY FORMER MFA

DIRECTOR GENERAL AVINERI IN JANUARY.

3. NEVERTHELESS, THESE HAVE BEEN SOME QUESTIONS RAISED BY LOCAL OBSERVERS ABOUT THE VISIT- BEGIN'S FIRST TRIP ABORAD AS PRIME MINISTER, OTHER THAN HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON. THERE IS NO DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE FOR THE VISIT- ALTHOUGH ISRAEL DOES HAVE A LARGE ROMANIAN COMMUNITY- AND ISRAELI/ROMANIAN TRADE RELATIONS, WHILE IMPORTANT, ARE NOT THE REASON FOR THE VISIT, ACCORDING TO BOTH GOVRIN AND IRONOI. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT BEGIN IS VISITING ROMANIA BECAUSE A) HE HAS BEEN INVITED -- AND THERE ARE NOT THAT MANY COUNTRIES INVITING THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER THESE DAYS; B) HE WANTS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT A THIRD COUNTRY-- EVEN AN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY-- CAN HAVE RELATIONS WITH BOTH ISRAEL AND ARAB STATES; AND C) HE WANTS TO DISSEMINATE ISRAEL'S VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

4. MIDDLE EAST DISCUSSIONS. THE ISRAELIS ARE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT A ROMANIAN ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE AWARE THAT ROMANIA IS SEEKING AN ACTIVE ROLE THERE, WHERE IT BELIEVES ITS PRESTIGE IS HIGHER THAN THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION. ISRAEL IS ALSO AWARE THAT ROMANIA HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH PARTIES TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, INCLUDING THE PLO, AND THAT ROMANIA IS REGARDED BY OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST. CONFIDENTIAL

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BEGIN WILL PRESENT HIS IDEAS FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE IS SPEAKING TO A WIDER AUDIENCE AND THAT THOSE VIEWS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE PASSED ON.

5. ISRAELIS SEE A ROMANIAN NATIONAL INTEREST BEING SERVED BY THE BEGIN VISIT. THEY VIEW CEAUSECU AS THE ARCHITECT OF A CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN POLICY, WHICH SEEKS A GREATER ROLE FOR ROMANIA IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY, AND THEY BELIEVE THAT ROMANIA REGARDS THE BEGIN VISIT AS A CONTRIBUTION TO ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND A REINFORCEMENT OF ROMANIA'S CLAIMS OF UNIVERSALITY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND OF BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER STATES.

6. JEWISH EMIGRATION. WHEN WE RAISED THE QUESTION OF EMIGRATION AND THE POSSIBLE DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT DURING THE VISIT, GOVRIN SAID EMPHATICALLY THAT IT WOULD NOT BE A MAJOR POINT OF DISCUSSION. BEGIN MAY WELL RAISE A FEW SPECIFIC CASES IN WHICH THE REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES IS DESIRED AND MAY SAY IN A GENERAL WAY THAT ISRAEL WOULD LIKE MORE ROMANIAN JEWS TO BE PERMITTED TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. HE SAID THAT ISRAEL MUST CONSTANTLY

SHOW RESTRAINT IN THIS AREA AND NOT SOLICIT JEWISH EMIGRATION PUBLICLY. WHILE THOUSANDS OF ISRAEL'S CITIZENS HAVE RELATIVES LIVING IN ROMANIA AND MANY OF THEM WOULD PERHAPS WISH TO LEAVE, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS NO CENTRAL REGISTER OF SUCH PERSONS AND DOES NOT PREPARE DEPARTURE AFFIDAVITS AS IT DOES FOR SOVIET EMIGRANTS. THE EMIGRATION OF PEOPLE (INCLUDING GERMANS AND HUNGARIANS) FROM ROMANIA IS A VERY SENSITIVE SUBJECT WITH THE GOVERNMENT THERE AND BEGIN DOES NOT INTEND THAT HIS VISIT SHOULD EXACERBATE THE SITUATION.

7. GOVRIN SHOWED GREAT SENSITIVITY ON THIS SUBJECT AND ARGUED THAT THE EMIGRATION OF ROMANIAN JEWS TO ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO BECOME A FACTOR IN
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U.S./ROMANIAN RELATIONS. ROMANIAN COMMERCIAL TIES TO THE WEST ARE IMPORTANT TO ROMANIAN IN ORDER TO GAIN ACCESS TO WESTERN TECHNOLOGY. HOWEVER, THAT ACCESS SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A TRADEOFF FOR EMIGRATION. DCM VIETS HAS AN APPOINTMENT WITH BEGIN FOR WEDNESDAY EVENING AUGUST 24 TO DISCUSS THIS APPOECT OF HIS VISIT AND WILL REPORT FURTHER.
LEWIS

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